CROYDON PHILATELIC SOCIETY:

NOTES OF THE MEETING HELD 26 February 2019

President **Graham Harker** opened the meeting at 1930 hours and welcomed the 14 members present. He introduced **Reg. Harrison** and invited him to give his display of **Belgium**.

Starting with a 1420 entire (probably the earliest item we have ever seen) Reg. showed examples of mail from the Spanish Netherlands followed by the Austrian Netherlands when the Thurn and Taxis operated the postal service. The French invaded Belgium in 1701 and came back intermittently until 1814. At one stage Belgium became a French province and was divided up into 9 departments..

Fine pieces of mail, including Corsini correspondence, from all these periods were shown. After 1815 Holland, Belgium and Luxembourg were united under the Kingdom of the Netherlands. For the next 15 years most of the hand struck marks were in Dutch or Flemish rather than French.

Belgium gained its independence in 1830 and issued its first stamps in 1831 with stamps and covers from that date through to World War 2 shown. Included were different papers, watermarks and perforations of all the different definitive stamps. In 1894 stamps were issued for the Antwerp Olympics and shown in large blocks. Censored mail from World War 1 was shown both to and from Germany and other countries and also stamps in large blocks, in a complicated format, for use in making booklets. The display ended with the Orval Abbey issues and miniature sheets used for sponsoring national stamp exhibitions.

Members were interested and impressed in viewing the material. **President Graham** thanked Reg. for his diverse, beautifully presented display and the meeting closed at 21.30 hours.

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Graham Harker/Brian Asquith